

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-13 (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the spray pattern has a fan shape, the fan shape corresponds to the number of inclined passages.
15. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the spray pattern has a fan shape, the fan shape corresponds to a cross-section of each of the plurality of inclined passages.
16. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the spray pattern has a fan shape, the fan shape corresponds to the angle of inclination of each of the plurality of inclined passages.
17. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the spray pattern has a fan shape, the fan shape corresponds to a distance of each of the plurality of inclined passages from the longitudinal axis.
18. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, the spray pattern has a fan shape, the fan shape has a plurality of plumes.
19. (Currently Amended) A method of generating a spray pattern from a fuel injector in a direct injection application, the fuel injector having a body, a longitudinal axis, a needle slidingly disposed within the body, and a seat disposed at a fuel outlet, the method comprising the steps of:
  - engaging a tip of the needle against a surface of the seat to form a seal;
  - providing the seat with a plurality of passages including at least four passages between the surface and the fuel outlet, the passages having ends disposed on a common plane ~~that terminate into a seat exit passage disposed at~~

the fuel outlet with an angle between centers of adjacent ends being substantially 90 degrees, each of the plurality of passages having a central axis having an angle of inclination relative to the longitudinal axis, an end of each at least one of the plurality of passages is at a different distance from the longitudinal axis than an end ~~the ends~~ of each one of the other passages, and supplying fuel to the fuel injector so that a spray pattern is formed.

Claims 20-21 (Canceled)

22. (Currently Amended) A method of generating a spray pattern from a fuel injector in a direct injection application, the fuel injector having a body, a longitudinal axis, a needle slidably disposed within the body, and a seat disposed at a fuel outlet, the method comprising the steps of:

engaging a tip of the needle against a surface of the seat to form a seal;

providing the seat with a plurality of passages including at least four passages between the surface and the fuel outlet, the passages having ends disposed on a common plane ~~terminating into a seat exit passage disposed at~~ the fuel outlet with an angle between centers of adjacent ends being substantially 90 degrees, each of the plurality of passages having a central axis having an angle of inclination relative to the longitudinal axis, an end of at least one of the plurality of passages has a different cross-section than an end ~~ends~~ of at least one of the other passages; and

supplying fuel to the fuel injector so that a spray pattern is formed.

23. Canceled

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to one of claims 19 and 22, wherein the angle of inclination for at least one of the plurality of passages is different than the other passages.